

It is for this reason that we meet here today, for the world must never forget the unspeakable horror of the Holocaust. Every person has a responsibility to fight against ignorance, intolerance and prejudice in all its forms.

So let us rededicate ourselves as we commemorate this day of Yom HaShoah, so that the memories of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust can live on for eternity and that a tragedy like this will never happen on the face of the earth again.

HOLOCAUST MARTYRS' AND HEROES' REMEMBRANCE DAY

HON. MAX SANDLIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 2004

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, last Sunday, April 18, 2004, the people of the world memorialized Yom HaShoah—a special day of remembrance honoring the martyrs and heroes of the Holocaust. Holocaust Remembrance Day is a day that has been set aside to remember the victims of the Holocaust and to remind each of us what can happen when bigotry and hatred are not confronted.

Mr. Speaker, I am humbled as I rise today with my colleagues to honor the memories and the lives of the more than 6 million victims of Nazi hatred and aggression during the pogrom known to us as the Holocaust. I am also humbled to stand in this cathedral of freedom and honor the lives of the many heroes who fought so bravely against unimaginable odds to defeat a genocidal madman.

More than 60 years ago, Adolf Hitler and his Nazi regime set out to eradicate European Jewry. So committed were they to the accomplishment of this goal, their so-called "Final Solution," that even in the waning days of World War II, when defeat was imminent, the Germans continued rounding up Jews all over Europe and sending them to their deaths.

Mr. Speaker, driven by a radical and uncompromising anti-Semitic ideology, the Nazis redoubled their efforts to reach every last Jew before the war ended. They were in a rush; time was running out. Depleting sorely-needed resources from the war effort, German forces swept across Europe, assembling and annihilating community after community, individual after individual, from their homes, ghettos and hiding places.

Mr. Speaker, during the last year of the war in Europe, German defeat was all but accomplished, and yet their hatred and bigotry survived and thrived. Consequently, the Nazis murdered more than 700,000 Jews in the last full year of the war, including most of the Jews of the last large community in Europe, Hungary. In one of the most efficient deportation and murder operations of the Holocaust, the Nazi and Hungarian regimes deported 437,000 Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau in just eight weeks, and killed tens of thousands more later that year.

Six decades have passed since Allied troops liberated the labor and death camps, and yet the memory of the horrors perpetrated against the Jewish people is seared into the collective conscious of the world. However, Mr. Speaker, sadly, we cannot undo history, and we cannot reverse the atrocities carried out by a barbarous German regime.

What remains for us is to honor and preserve the memories and lives of both the victims and the survivors of the Holocaust. Out of the great tragedy of the Holocaust emerges a tremendous object lesson for humanity: hatred and bigotry can never be taken for granted or left unchecked. We must never forget.

Mr. Speaker, memory is critical—our own and that of the victims of unprecedented evil and suffering. The Holocaust is an era we must remember not only because of the dead; it is too late for them. Not only because of the survivors; it may even be too late for them. Preserving memory is a solemn responsibility, aimed at saving men and women from apathy to evil, if not from evil itself. We must never forget.

Mr. Speaker, sixty years ago, much of the world overlooked the deadly plight of an entire people until it was almost too late. We have a sacred obligation—in order to truly keep faith with the principles upon which our great nation was founded—to remain vigilant, to remember the horrors of the past, to learn from them, and to protect against them for all eternity. We must never forget.

Mr. Speaker, Nobel laureate and Holocaust survivor, Elie Wiesel, perhaps summed it up best when he said, "to remain silent and indifferent is the greatest sin of all." As Americans, we must heed his call and embrace his challenge. We must never forget.

COMMEMORATION OF YOM HASHOAH, AND UPCOMING OSCE CONFERENCE ON ANTI-SEMITISM

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 2004

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, which memorializes the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis during their campaign of genocide in World War II. We mourn the innocent lives lost and vibrant communities destroyed while the world shamefully stood silent, and honor those heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto who faced certain death when they refused to submit to the Nazi's planned extermination of their community.

To this day, Mr. Speaker, many European countries have failed to right the past wrongs of the Holocaust by failing to adequately redress the wrongful confiscation of property by the Nazi and communist regimes. These seizures took place over decades; they were part of the modus operandi of repressive, totalitarian regimes; and they affected millions of people. The passage of time, border changes, and population shifts are only a few of the things that make the wrongful property seizures of the past such difficult problems to address today.

While I recognize that many obstacles stand in the way of righting these past wrongs, I do not believe that these challenges make property restitution or compensation impossible. On the contrary, I believe much more should have been done—and can still be done now—while our elderly Holocaust survivors are still living.

Today I also want to sound the alarm about a disturbing trend that Jews face today: a rising tide of anti-Semitism throughout the world.

I serve as the Ranking Member of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), commonly known as the Helsinki Commission. Later today I will travel to Europe as part of the U.S. Delegation to several meetings of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), a fifty-five national regional security organization which includes Europe, Central Asia, and North America. The Helsinki Commission has held multiple hearings on this issue, and the House and Senate have adopted resolutions strongly condemning this rising tide of anti-Semitism, as has the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

As part of my upcoming Helsinki Commission trip, I will travel to Warsaw, Krakow, and then to the death camps at Auschwitz, to see firsthand the remains of the factories of intolerance, hate, and death. From there I will travel to an OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism, which will also be attended by Secretary of State Colin Powell. I will then return to the United States, where I will host a group of constituents at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

The Berlin Conference will be instrumental in the battle against anti-Semitism, as elected officials, government leaders and executives of non-governmental organizations come together to discuss how to fight this destructive evil. Anti-Semitism still afflicts societies throughout the world, including the United States. While we have made some progress in moving governments to respond through public denunciations and vigorous law enforcement, there is much more we can do to confront and combat anti-Semitism. The Conference will specifically address the roles of governments, civil society, education and the media in combating prejudice and in promoting tolerance.

As we commemorate Yom Hashoah, let us honor the memory of those who perished in the Holocaust by pledging to fight intolerance, hate crimes, and violence in our community and around the world. We shall never be silent again.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 2004

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the 6 million Jews who perished at the hands of the Nazis during the Holocaust. Today in the nation's Capitol, we gather to pay our respects with our Days of Remembrance ceremony. My district, the 9th Congressional District of Illinois, is home to a large number of survivors of the Nazi death camps, and this day holds deep meaning for those individuals and the entire Jewish community.

Recent events in the Middle East and around the world underscore the importance of this day. Anti-Semitic and anti-Israel rhetoric and demonstrations continue in numerous countries. And while we respect the right of every person to be heard, the hateful displays throughout the world that are directed at the Jewish people remind us that "Never Again" is not a guarantee, but a promise that we must uphold through education, dialogue, and determination. It reminds us that we must continue